

HISTORIC TRIANGLE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JAMES CITY COUNTY  CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG  YORK COUNTY

MEETING NOTES October 27, 2014

Members Present: Nancy Carter, Ted Moreland, Rich Thompson, Katherine Preston, Don Cherry, Kurt Schueler, Patrick Johnson, Ken Doak, Stephanie Weber

Members Absent: Scott Bartram, Rick Bartels

Staff Present: Rodney Rhodes, Amy Parker

Guests: Allen Turnbull, John McGlennon

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the July 2014 meeting had not been received from James City County staff. It was noted that Mr. Vinciguerra had left the County, and a new staff liaison would be assigned by the next Committee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Guests Allen Turnbull and John McGlennon, James City County Supervisor, were introduced.

ROUTE 60 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS – JOHN MCGLENNON

Mr. Moreland indicated that a meeting had been held with himself, Mr. McGlennon, Mr. Turnbull, and Mr. Cherry to discuss potential improvements to the section of Route 60 between the Williamsburg city line and the Riverside Hospital complex.

Mr. McGlennon discussed existing bikeways issues for the corridor. He noted that Route 60 was used by bicyclists to commute to work. There are limited public transportation options for area employees, especially those in the hospitality business. Obtaining funds for facilities is difficult, and the County has been criticized in the past for spending monies on bikeways. Busch Gardens staff has indicated they are interested in improving the appearance of the corridor. Future funding may be available from the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. There are many new road improvement plans for the area, but no clear funding sources have been identified for the projects. When there must be cost cuts, bikeways often are deleted from projects.

Mr. Moreland noted that updates to the Regional Bikeway Map had been recently approved by James City County. He inquired about the viewpoint of the Board of Supervisors toward bikeways. Mr. McGlennon replied that Board members should be educated about the advantages of bikeways, and use of bikes by commuters should be emphasized.

Mr. Thompson noted that bicycling could be related to area tourism.

Mr. McGlennon noted that politicians want to know what issues citizens care about, and the need for bicycle facilities should be part of their education. The bicycling community is well organized, and should emphasize the advantages of bicycling for the public.

Ms. Preston noted there were issues with misinformation about needs and costs of projects. The Longhill Road corridor is an example. Mr. McGlennon recommended attendance at public meetings to provide accurate information to citizens and the Board. Essays in local newspapers are a good idea, and a slide show about area facilities would be a good idea.

Mr. Thompson noted that a student bicycle advocacy group had been established at the College of William and Mary (W&M). He inquired if a student presentation to the Board would be helpful. Mr. McGlennon responded that it was a good idea, and the Board should know about needed improvements for local bicycle facilities. Citizens have indicated that they would use bikes more often if more safe routes existed.

Mr. Cherry noted that meetings had been held between HTBAC members and James City County staff about developing a road diet design for the Route 60 corridor. He inquired about the status of the issue. Mr. McGlennon indicated that VDOT had decided to implement a lesser design when the road was repaved. The idea of a road diet design should not be abandoned. There has been interest in improving the corridor to help promote tourism and improve bike facilities at the same time. Tourism agencies should be involved in promoting improvements. Busch Gardens staff has indicated they are concerned about the safety of the road for their employees. The WATA bus schedule doesn't mesh well with the park's operating hours. The issue should be covered in the update to the County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Cherry inquired if the Committee should continue to talk to VDOT and if speaking with political representatives would be helpful. Mr. McGlennon recommended continuing to speak with VDOT as well as contacting legislators, including local Senators and Delegates.

Ms. Weber inquired about the timeline for the Comprehensive Plan update, and Mr. McGlennon responded that it would be late spring or early summer before the Plan was adopted. There will be public hearings for providing feedback to the Planning Commission and the Board before the Plan is adopted.

Mr. Schuler inquired about inclusion of bicycle facilities in the County budget. Mr. McGlennon suggested attendance at upcoming budget hearings to speak about the issue. The Board also annually reviews and approves the Six-Year Transportation plan, which is coordinated with the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization. The current Board Chair is a representative on the HRPTO Board.

Mr. Cherry suggested having Rossie Carroll from VDOT's Williamsburg residency office come to a future HTBAC meeting to discuss local issues. Mr. Moreland noted that Mr. Carroll has always been supportive of the Committee.

Mr. McGlennon suggested inviting VDOT Hampton Roads District Administrator James Utterback to a Committee meeting. Mr. Cherry requested that Mr. Moreland follow up with the request.

Mr. McGlennon noted that the Route 60 corridor improvements have also been discussed by the Historical Triangle Collaborative. The group should be contacted for support.

Mr. Turnbull noted that a recent grant application for funding for a Route 60 corridor improvement project, prepared by Carlton Abbott, had not been successful. Restriping of the road corridor was the only improvement done since that time.

Mr. Thompson inquired if the County was active in promoting tourism. Mr. McGlennon responded that there was interest in tourism, but the County does not have a lot of destinations like Colonial Williamsburg. There are not a lot of hotels in the County, but they do have a lot of timeshare developments.

Mr. Moreland suggested coordinating with the Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance on bikeway issues.

Mr. Schuler inquired about a one-time tax assessment for a specific project in the County. Mr. McGlennon responded that may require an increase in the tax rate, which was not feasible.

Mr. Moreland noted that bike and trail facilities have been shown to increase real estate values.

Mr. Moreland summarized future actions to be taken:

- Participate in the Comprehensive Plan update process

- Participate in local budget adoption processes

- Educate the public about the benefits of bicycle facilities. For example, use of a video as is posted on the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists website.

Mr. McGlennon suggested including a video on the local government TV channels.

Mr. Doak suggested comparing our local area with national trends in bicycling.

Ms. Preston noted that surveys taken from the Capitol to Capitol Trail were available for review.

Mr. Cherry noted that the Committee should continue to work with VDOT on a road diet for Route 60. He inquired if the James City County Board would support the idea. Mr. McGlennon responded that he could not speak for the entire Board on the issue. He suggested that the project be promoted as one that would benefit public safety and tourism.

Mr. Moreland noted that Committee members should attend Comprehensive Plan update hearings, Mr. Cherry will follow up on the meeting schedule.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Turnbull noted that the State Bicycle Advisory Committee had discussed a change in VDOT policy that if a locality reduces a road width from three to two lanes, their maintenance funding from VDOT would be reduced. A resolution was made to recommend that no locality be penalized for reducing vehicle lanes when bike lanes are added.

The Committee also discussed eco-counters to tally the numbers of bikes, horses, and pedestrians using a given trail. The more sophisticated counters can distinguish between a pedestrian, horse, or bicycle.

Mr. Turnbull is teaching a course on bicycling at W&M. So far, the course is going well.

Mr. Thompson updated the group on W&M bicycle facility efforts. The Design and Review Board will be taking a look at installation of road sharrows for bicycles on campus. A bicycling film will be shown during the Charter Day week events. Additional fixit stations will be installed around campus.

Ms. Parker informed the group about two VDOT bicycle/pedestrian corridor safety studies that were contracted to URS. Study locations are Monticello Avenue between News Road and Ironbound Road and Bypass Road between Colony Drive and Commons Way. The studies will review existing and future bicycle and pedestrian use and facilities and make recommendations for improvements in the corridors. A draft study report should be done by the time of the next Committee meeting. Ms. Parker will forward copies of the studies to Committee members.

Mr. Thompson discussed the need for a bike/pedestrian facility for the bridge that needs replacing over Lake Powell. Permission of adjacent property owners will be necessary. Mr. Turnbull inquired if the bikeway connection is included on the regional bikeways map. Ms. Parker replied that the link was shown as a proposed facility on the map. Mr. Turnbull suggested contacting the James City County Supervisor for that district to request support for the facility. The consensus of the group was to wait to take action on the issue pending known property owner agreement with the proposal.

Mr. Moreland noted that local meetings were being held about increased bicycling and tourism opportunities associated with the UCI Road World Championships bicycle races to be held in Richmond, Virginia on September 19 – 27, 2015.

Mr. Moreland noted that a new chairman would need to be elected at the January Committee meeting. Ms. Weber has agreed to be a nominee for the position.

Ms. Carter noted that tree roots had become a problem in the Lafayette Street bike lanes. Mr. Rhodes will check with the Public Works department about resolving the issue.

Mr. Cherry noted that a bike lane was needed along Richmond Road in the W&M campus area. The existing lane along Jamestown Road needs to be extended. A multi-use trail should be installed along Monticello Avenue to connect the New Town area to campus. If VDOT or federal grant monies can be obtained, the City and W&M could split the 20% match funds.

Mr. Johnston inquired about Committee activities in York County. Ms. Parker noted that the Planning Commission had requested a presentation about the Committee at one of their future meetings. Ms. Parker will be scheduling a presentation early next year.

Ms. Parker noted a concern brought up by a Dandy resident about bicyclists riding too fast along Dandy Loop Road. There is a dangerous curve in the road where sight distance is poor near the refinery. Signage was discussed, but members familiar with the area noted that the issue was with the bicyclists and how they ride, not with signage. Representatives from the York County Sheriff's office did come out to a bike ride sponsored by the Peninsula Bicycle Association to speak about safety issues on the road.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 PM

Next meeting – January 26, 2015.

Minutes adopted 1/26/15